

**Wyoming Bureau of Land Management
Recreation Fee Demonstration Program
Communications Plan**

revised 2/25/2000

Background

In May 1996, the United States Congress authorized the Recreation Fee Demonstration Program by passing Public Law 104-134. The Recreation Fee Demonstration Program is designed to test different methods of collecting user fees at recreation sites on public lands and to determine whether they are an efficient and effective mechanism to fund the operation, maintenance, and enhancement of the areas where they are collected. The program allows the Bureau of Land Management, the U.S.D.A. Forest Service, National Park Service, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to conduct tests at up to 100 recreation sites or project areas per agency across the country. The Recreation Fee Demonstration Program was authorized for a 3-year period which has since been extended to September 30, 2001.

The Recreation Fee Demonstration Program authorizes the agencies to collect and deposit fees (from either new or existing fee programs) for individuals and groups admission to an area or for use of outdoor recreation sites, facilities, visitor centers, equipment, and services. Agency managers have the flexibility to determine appropriate fees and collection methods for each area.

At these fee sites or project areas, 100 percent of the monies collected can be used to operate, maintain, repair, and improve recreation facilities, enhance wildlife habitat, protect natural resources, and improve visitor services, such as interpretation, signs, and law enforcement.

Summary

Early in 1999 the Wyoming Bureau of Land Management evaluated the possibility of converting existing Wyoming BLM Campgrounds currently collecting user fees under the authority of the Land and Water Conservation Fund into the Recreation Fee Demonstration Program. This would affect the following BLM Field Offices and campgrounds when they open for public use in the spring of 1999:

Initial Wyoming BLM Recreation Fee Demo Project Areas/Fees (1999)

Field Office	Existing Fee Campground	1999 User Fee Charge (per campsite)
Cody	Five Springs Falls	\$7.00
Lander	Big Atlantic Gulch	\$6.00
	Atlantic City	\$6.00
	Cottonwood Campground	\$6.00
Rawlins	Bennett Peak	\$7.00
	Encampment River	\$7.00
Kemmerer	Fontenelle Creek	\$5.00 \$2.00 Trailer Dump Station Fee
Casper	Lodgepole	\$5.00 \$2.00 per extra vehicle
	Rim	\$5.00 \$2.00 per extra vehicle
Pinedale	Warren Bridge	\$6.00 \$3.00 Trailer Dump Station Fee

The fees collected at these campgrounds were deposited into the United States Government's General Treasury. Under the Recreation Fee Demonstration Program, fee collections are deposited by individual Field Office Project number assignment. Nomination into the Pilot Fee Demonstration Program makes 100 percent of the monies collected immediately available for the affected Field Office to use for making improvements to these campgrounds.

This Communications Plan will guide Recreation Fee Demonstration goals for all Wyoming BLM FOs and serve as an action plan for public involvement and awareness of the project. Project Managers must communicate with the public how expected revenues will be spent. The status of spending revenues is expected to change regularly as managers gain additional information and comments about their fee site areas.

Fiscal Year 2000 Update

On February 15, 2000, the Wyoming Management Team approved expansion of the Wyoming BLM Recreation Fee Demonstration Program to include Special Recreation Permit (SRP) revenues from all ten Wyoming Field Offices (FOs). These revenues will be deposited into the fee demonstration account established for each FO. Those FOs that also collect Recreation Use Permit (RUP) fees will need to track RUP and SRP revenues separately. FOs should use the Recreation Management Information System (RMIS) for tracking differences between revenues attributable to RUP and SRP fee collections.

FY 99 SRP Revenues by Field Office

Field Office	SRP's administered	LWCF Deposits
Worland	19	\$2,576.63
Cody	36	5,057.06
Rawlins	59	8,345.48
Rock Springs	19	1,171.60
Lander	30	13,052.31
Casper	29	0
Buffalo	44	6,590.55
New Castle	7	1,436.53
Kemmerer	9	0
Pinedale	46	130.00
Totals	298	\$39,350.16

Table based on FY 99 Wyoming BLM RMIS Data

Public Coordination

The expenditure of use fees should be coordinated with the customers and permittees as to what they will get for paying use fees. Each fee demonstration project manager will need to identify a list of what our customers want with priorities assigned to be used in setting spending priorities, planned accomplishments, and time-lines.

Project managers can use a variety of mechanisms (including individual meetings with permit holders, consultation with county commissioners and civic groups, news releases, public meetings, etc.) to develop priority lists based on what customers want at the fee sites.

A Wyoming BLM Core Team will be designated through this Communications Plan to ensure flow of public information between external affairs and project managers for each participating FO and the Wyoming State Office. This Core Team will consist of:

Worland FO	Dave Baker, Janine Terry
Cody FO	Shirley Bye-Jech, Janine Terry
Rawlins FO	Krystal Clair, Mary Apple
Rock Springs FO	Andy Tenney, Mike Brown
Lander FO	Gary Long, Mary Apple
Casper FO	Rod Sanders, Lesley Collins
Buffalo FO	Larry Gerard, Lesley Collins
New Castle FO	Gary Lebsack, Lesly Collins
Kemmerer FO	Wally Mierzejewski, Mary Apple
Pinedale FO	Martin Hudson, Mary Apple
Wyoming SO	Mark Goldbach, Cindy Wertz

Goals

- * All 100 percent of the fees collected will be available for reinvesting and use by the BLM at the project area where the fees were collected. One account project number has been set up for each participating FO. All deposits of SRP revenues into your FO recreation fee demonstration program account should begin March 1, 2000.
- Funds will be used for administration, operation, maintenance, improvements, and interpretation to enhance recreation opportunities and visitor experiences.
- General Government overhead (equipment, supplies, rents, salaries for line management, etc.) is not to be charged against these new fee collections. The collected funds are to be in addition to normal funding for these sites. There should be no offsets in funding. Labor costs for hiring temporary (seasonal) personnel necessary to assist with administration of the recreation fee demonstration project is acceptable.
- Each office that sponsors a site/project area will be prepared to provide an accounting of the funds collected and expended.
- Field Managers will continue to have the discretion to allow volunteers to use facilities without paying a fee.

Operating Costs Compared To Fee Collection Revenues

Project Area	1998 Visitor Use	1998 Operating Costs (includes maintenance, visitor services and fee collection costs)	1998 Fee Collection Revenues
Bennett Peak Campground	9,000	\$2,450	\$2,260
Encampment River Campground	3,000	\$2,450	\$1,613
Lodgepole Campground	319	\$2,950	\$ 412
Rim Campground	300	\$2,950	\$ 205
Five Springs Falls Campground	5,000	\$8,397	\$ 0 (reconstruction)
Atlantic City Campground	3,150	\$7,800	\$5,388
Big Atlantic City Campground	1,050	\$6,150	\$1,777
Cottonwood Campground	875	\$7,650	\$1,726
Warren Bridge Campground	967	\$12,400	\$5,292
Fontenelle Creek Campground	750	\$48,938 (mostly BOR funding for improvements)	\$2,575
TOTALS	24,411	\$102,135	\$21,248

Implementation Action Planning

ACTION ITEM	RESPONSIBLE PERSON	TARGET DATE
Submit Project Nominations	Project Managers	3/99
Prepare statewide News Release	Mark Goldbach/Cindy Wertz	2/99
Set-Up Project Accounts	Mark Goldbach	4/99
Coordinate with Local Public	Project Managers	ongoing
Coordinate with Congressional Delegation	Mark Goldbach/Cindy Wertz	4/99
Sign Areas as Fee Demo Sites	Project Managers	5/99
Adjust Fees Using Comparables	Project Managers	annually
Initiate Collection of Fees under Fee Demo Program	Project Managers	5/99
Prepare for expenditure of fee collections	Project Managers	ongoing
Prepare Rec Fee Demo Report for WO	Project Managers/Mark Goldbach	annually
Account for fee collections and expenditures	Project Managers	annually
Install Fee Demo Program Information on BLM Web Page	Cindy Wertz	ongoing
Prepare a Rec. Fee Demo Fact Sheet	Mark Goldbach/Cindy Wertz	ongoing
Consider expanding the WY BLM Rec. Fee Demo. Program to other areas of <u>existing</u> fee collections including map sales and Special Recreation Permits.	Wyoming Management Team	2000
Consider expanding the WY BLM Rec. Fee Demo. Program to potential <u>new</u> fee collection areas, sites, products and services.	Wyoming Management Team	2000
Prepare nomination forms for Expansion of the Rec Fee Demo Program	Mark Goldbach/Field Managers	3/1/2000
Establish project numbers for four additional Field Offices	Mark Goldbach/Field Managers	3/1/2000
Revise WY. BLM Rec Fee Demo Communications Plan	Mark Goldbach/Field Managers	3/1/2000
Prepare Statewide News Release for Expanded Program	Mark Goldbach/Cindy Wertz	3/1/2000
Continuous accountability for RUP and SRP fund collections and expenditures	Field Managers	annually

The following project numbers have been established in the Wyoming SO for each of the participating FOs recreation fee demonstration project collections and expenditures. Please use these project numbers for RUP revenue deposits started in 1999, and all SRP revenues deposits as of March 1, 2000. **Expenditures and obligations against these accounts are charged against subactivity 1232.**

Recreation Fee Demo Financial Data Tracking
Updated 2/15/2000

Field Office	Recreation Fee Demo Collection Areas	Fee Demo Project Number Assignment
Worland	Special Recreation Permits	WY010-1232-77-WY01
Cody	Five Springs Falls Campground, Recreation Use Permits and Special Recreation Permits	WY020-1232-77-WY08
Rawlins	Bennett Peak Campground Encampment River Campground, Recreation Use Permits and Special Recreation Permits	WY030-1232-77-WY03
Rock Springs	Special Recreation Permits	WY040-1232-77-WY10
Lander	Atlantic City Campground Big Atlantic Gulch Campground Cottonwood Campground, Recreation Use Permits and Special Recreation Permits	WY050-1232-77-WY05
Casper	Lodgepole Campground Rim Campground Muddy Mountain E.E.A., Recreation Use Permits and Special Recreation Permits	WY060-1232-77-WY06
Buffalo	Special Recreation Permits	WY070-1232-77-WY11
Newcastle	Special Recreation Permits	WY080-1232-77-WY09
Kemmerer	Fontenelle Creek Campground, Recreation Use Permits and Special Recreation Permits	WY090-1232-77-WY04
Pinedale	Warren Bridge Campground, Recreation Use Permits and Special Recreation Permits	WY100-1232-77-WY07

Potential Areas to Spend Special Recreation Permit Fee Collection Revenues

There are many projects we can initiate that would benefit Special Recreation Permit holders and their clients including:

- Visitor Services (boundary signs, road signs, brochures, maps, interpretive/informational signs, easements for public access, cadastral survey to determine public land boundaries) to improve the visitor's health and safety, or quality of the user's experience.

- Habitat Improvement Projects (weed control, water developments, burnings, plantings) that enhance big game populations or the growth of trophy game animals.

- Law Enforcement (equipment and labor for pursuing illegal outfitters).

- Seasonal Employment (for SRP administration).

- Facility Maintenance/Developments (trail head parking, boat ramps, access roads, trail maintenance, horse facilities, game poles, bear resistant food containers, restrooms) to improve the quality of the users experience.

Number: 00-12
Date: 3/2/00

WYOMING BLM NEWS

Bureau of Land Management 5353 Yellowstone Rd. P.O. Box 1828 Cheyenne, WY 82009

Contact: Cindy Wertz

(307) 775-6014

Bureau of Land Management Recommends Special Recreation Permit Fees be Used in Special Fee Demo Program

Fees collected from BLM's Special Recreation Permit (SRP) program will stay in Wyoming for on-the-ground projects as part of the new Recreation Fee Demonstration Program.

The fee demo program allows fees collected from SRP's to be kept by the BLM field office making the collection for improvements that will benefit SRP holders. In Fiscal Year 1999 Wyoming BLM administered 298 SRPs (which consist mostly of commercial outfitter permittees) and collected \$39,350.16 in statewide revenues. This money was then deposited in the United States government's General Treasury. Under the new program these revenues will be deposited into fee demo project accounts established for each Wyoming BLM field office. All ten Wyoming BLM field offices will participate in this program.

No new fees will be collected. However, 100% of the existing SRP fee revenues will be available for immediate use for on-the-ground improvements such as visitor services, habitat improvement projects, law enforcement, facility development and maintenance. The fee demo program is scheduled to expire September 30, 2001. At that time, Congress may authorize the program as a permanent program or reauthorize it for another temporary term.

The SRP fee collections, deposits and expenditures under the Recreation Fee Demo Program will begin immediately. For more information, call Mark Goldbach, (307) 775-6102.

#####

Rediscover Your Public Lands